

Title: Margarita's Orgasms

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Margarita is “*nagaia i nevidimaia*” during her flight in chapter 21, “*Polet*,” of M. Bulgakov’s *The Master and Margarita*. In the case of Margarita’s nudity, the description invites a potentially erotic visualization of Margarita, but this invitation is immediately withdrawn by the second description of her as invisible: the erotic reading is immediately subverted by the impossibility of visualizing the invisible. The description of Margarita as both naked and invisible functions to reveal and conceal her simultaneously. Margarita’s state—“*nagaia i nevidimaia*”—can be seen as emblematic of the novel’s orientation to erotic themes. *The Master and Margarita* offers the potential for erotic interpretation while simultaneously subverting such interpretation. In this sense, the novel’s relationship to erotic subject matter is governed by the actions of suggestion and repression—“*nagaia*” but “*nevidimaia*.”

This paper suggests that Margarita is depicted experiencing two orgasms in chapters 20 (*Krem Azazello*) and 21 (*Polet*) of *The Master Margarita*. To my knowledge, these episodes have hitherto gone either unnoticed or, at the very least, uncommented upon by scholars. This paper argues for their presence, suggests (as I have hinted above) why readers may miss them, and then offers an interpretation of their broader significance for the novel. Theoretically, this paper dialogues with Thomas Laqueur’s *Solitary Sex* (2003) and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s groundbreaking article “Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl” (1991) among others. It also considers the meaning of sexual pleasure in proximity to power within the historical context of the Soviet 1930s.

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